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Fragmentary Futures: Bradbury's Illustrated Man Outlines--and Beyond

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"I believe first drafts, like life and living, must be immediate, quick, passionate. By writing a draft in a day I have a story with a skin around it."

Ray Bradbury's creative coda originated long before he fashioned this concise version of it for his December 1964 Show magazine interview. His daily writing habit had become a quotidian fever by the early 1940s, and he soon learned to avoid interruptions from any other voices—including his own rational judgments. Each day became a race between subconscious inspiration and the stifling effects of his own self-conscious thoughts—the more logical thought patterns that he desperately tried to hold at bay during the few hours it would take him to complete an initial draft.

Bradbury was convinced that the magic would dissolve away if he failed to carry through on a story idea or an opening page at first sitting, and it's not surprising that his Show interview coda came with a cautionary corollary: "If one waits overnight to finish a story, quite often the texture one gets the next day is different. You wind up with two kinds of flesh, one of which will not graft onto the other." By the mid-1960s, the densely packed creative seedlings of his pomegranate mind had yielded more than 270 published stories, hundreds of unpublished tales, and thousands of deferred fragment fictions that would, unfortunately, remain unfulfilled creations.

The process of fragmentation radiated out far beyond his stories, and the Albright Collection contains many fragment poems, fragment essays, fragment novels, and even fragments of sea chanteys that Bradbury composed in 1953–54 as he transformed Moby Dick from novel to screenplay under the demanding eye of director John Huston. This fractured, elusive, and highly

complex background to Bradbury's published work also impacted the way he charted his creative futures in proposed book outlines and the sequences of future books he hoped to publish throughout the early decades of his career. The recoverable record of these alternative futures is fascinating, and reveals a great deal about the instability lurking beneath Bradbury's solid and enduring achievements as a masterful teller of tales.

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The Illustrated Man outlines (1947–1950) serve as a significant example of this unpredictable process. On one level, the many surviving content outlines for his future books communicate a sense of completeness as stand-alone documents, but one soon discovers that this is a transitory and often fleeting completeness. Bradbury, who so often revised and even rewrote his stories, also moved them in and out of story collection concepts in ways that prevented any degree of stability until a given volume (if it were fortunate enough to reach print at all) was locked into galleys or page proofs. Even here, however, Bradbury demonstrated a propensity to destabilize these forms of presswork; for Dark Carnival (1947), his first book and first story collection, he revised, deleted, and added stories in the galley sheets, and even cut two stories from the page proofs. His publisher, Arkham House founder August Derleth, finally forbade major revisions to three of the best tales. Not surprisingly, his Doubleday editors faced similar challenges at various times throughout the long publishing history of The Martian Chronicles (1950), as Bradbury moved various story-chapters in and out of this modern classic; by the late 1990s, six different American and British versions were in print.[1]

Many developmental outlines survive for both of these works; for the most part, these are tentative, fragmentary, or heavily overwritten. Most of the Dark Carnival and Martian Chronicles outlines have been fully discussed elsewhere,[2] but his third book, Doubleday's The Illustrated

Man (1951), has an equally fascinating legacy of content outlines that has languished far too long in the shadows of literary studies. Establishing the sequence of these largely undated outlines eventually yields a whole cloth of creative development, a patchwork tapestry through which we can document Bradbury's evolving intentions and vision for one of his best-known story collections.

From the beginning, the Illustrated Man outlines exhibit creativity far beyond mere bricolage; they tell us a great deal about how Bradbury was conceiving larger configurations of his stories during the late 1940s, a crucial point in his early career. By the fall of 1947, the 27-year-old author had published more than a hundred professional stories in a wide range of genre pulps and a growing number of major market magazines, but so far his only book credit was centered on Arkham House and its niche market of weird fiction writers and readers. The first known outline for a story collection titled The Illustrated Man, datable by content to 1947, contains much internal evidence that Bradbury was ready to showcase a broader range of work. In various outline forms, The Illustrated Man collection remained at the center of this impulse for the next four years.

First Outline

Figure 1 presents the seven known outlines for The Illustrated Man in tabular form, beginning (in the far left column) with the 1947 outline. The twenty-three story titles include six of the best stories from Dark Carnival, leading off with two of the most enduring: "The Next in Line," the first and best-known of his Mexican tales, and "The Homecoming," which earned a place in the O. Henry Prize Stories volume of 1947. He included "Dark Carnival," the original title story that he held out of Dark Carnival for further development (it would eventually provide the opening plot and characters for Something Wicked This Way Comes). But this new

collection was intended to showcase his full range of subject and genre; here too were some of his newer major market magazine stories, including "Invisible Boy" (Mademoiselle), "The Big Black and White Game" (American Mercury), which had earned a Best American Short Stories anthology selection in 1946, and "Powerhouse," scheduled for the March 1948 issue of Charm and destined to place third in the O. Henry Prize Stories annual for 1948.

Evolving Outlines for *The Illustrated Man*, 1947–1950

As *The Illustrated Man*, c.1947	As *The Illustrated Man*, (fragment), c.1948	As *The Illustrated Man*, December 1948	As *Forever and the Earth*, c. fall 1949	As *Frost and Fire*, May 1950	Untitled, mid-summer 1950	As *The Illustrated Man*, late summer 1950	Published Contents, February 1951
The Next in Line	Power House	Power House	Forever and the Earth	~~The Playground~~	Prologue	Prologue: The Illustrated Man	Prologue: The Illustrated Man
The Homecoming	The Earth Men	Ylla	Kaleidoscope	The Concrete Mixer	The Veldt	The Veldt	The Veldt
Invisible Boy	El Dia De Muerte	Way in the Middle of the Air	Pillar of Fire	Kaleidoscope	Kaleidoscope	Kaleidoscope	Kaleidoscope
Skeleton	And the Moon Be Still as Bright	The Earth Men	The Visitor	The Veldt	The Other Foot	The Other Foot	The Other Foot
Power House	I See You Never	El Dia De Muerte	Usher II	The Fox and the Forest (To the Future)	The Highway	The Highway	The Highway
The Illustrated Man	Invisible Boy	And the Moon Be Still as Bright	Zero Hour	~~Long Before Dawn~~	The Man	The Man	The Man
The October Game	The Long Years	I See You Never	The Veldt	The Rocket Man	The Long Rain	The Long Rain	The Long Rain
Dark Carnival	En La Noche	Invisible Boy	The City	[illegible cancel]	The Rocket Man	The Rocket Man	The Rocket Man
Mr. Saturday	The Screaming Woman	The Illustrated Man	The Space Man	The Visitor	The Fathers	The ~~Fathers~~ Fire Balloons	The Fire Balloons
Benjy Don't You Die	The Meadow	In the Night [En La Noche]	The Man With the Key in His Back	Death by Rain	The Last Night of the World	The Last Night of the World	The Last Night of the World
The Finnegan	Zero Hour	The Screaming Woman	The Vacation	~~Forever and the Earth~~	The Exiles	~~The Exiles~~	The Exiles
Cistern	Riabouchinska	The Meadow	The Other Foot	Marionettes, Inc.	The Rocket	~~No Particular Night or Morning~~	No Particular Night or Morning
The Night	Miracles of Jamie	The Long Years		The Man	The Visitor	~~The Visitor~~	The Fox and the Forest
Children's Hour	Pillar of Fire	An Interval in Sunlight		Zero Hour ~~Pillar of Fire~~	The Fox and the Forest	The Fox and the Forest	The Visitor
Pillar of Fire (short)		Zero Hour		The City (Purpose)	The Concrete Mixer	~~The Visitor The Concrete Mixer~~	The Concrete Mixer
The Sign (Free Dirt)		Marionettes, Inc.		~~The One Who Waits~~	Marionettes, Inc.	Marionettes, Inc.	Marionettes, Inc.
We'll Go No More A'Roving		Riabouchinska		~~Threshold to~~ Outcasts of the Stars (The Rocket)	The City	The City	The City
Million Year Picnic		The Silent Towns		The Fathers	Zero Hour	Zero Hour	Zero Hour
The Big Black and White Game		Miracles of Jamie		The Other Foot	The Rocket ~~No Particular Night or Morning~~]	The Rocket	The Rocket
The Coffin		The Other Foot		~~People That Time Forgot~~	Epilogue	Epilogue	Epilogue
~~Benjy Don't You Die~~		Pillar of Fire		~~The Vacation~~			
The Lonely One (Summer Night)		The Golden Window		The Highway ~~The Fire Man~~			
The Death of So and So				The Exiles ~~Payment in Full~~			
Great Grandma 2000 Years Old				The Last Night of the World			
				~~The Pedestrian~~			

Figure 1. The original story "The Illustrated Man," which was the initial inspiration for the collection, was added to the Avon (Morrow) hardbound edition in 1997, but appears in no other edition of The Illustrated Man.

The 1947 outline also held intimations of significant Bradbury volumes that were just beginning to surface in other more or less fragmentary outlines. These included two titles destined for The Martian Chronicles, "We'll Go No More A'Roving" (published as "And the Moon Be Still as Bright") and "The Million Year Picnic," and three that he would soon weave into his concept for a nostalgic Illinois novel—"The Night," "The Lonely One" (already adapted for CBS Radio as "Summer Night"), and "The Death of So and So." The first two eventually provided some of the best moments of suspense in Dandelion Wine, the novelized story cycle that emerged from the larger Illinois novel's fabric in 1957. This tantalizing mix of realism, science fiction, and dark fantasy, which included award-winning stories, first surfaces in this early Illustrated Man outline. But only one tale from this strong group of twenty-three, "Children's Hour" (published as "Zero Hour"), would remain when Bradbury finally published his Illustrated Man collection in 1951; the broader concept of fiction represented in this first outline would instead be transferred to another of his best-known collections, The Golden Apples of the Sun (1953).

Second and Third Outlines

The title story itself, placed sixth in the 1947 outline, was often on his mind. Bradbury and his New York agent, Don Congdon, had found strong interest for "The Illustrated Man" among the major slick magazine editors, but the general consensus was that it had too many effects and relied too much on magical elements to tell the tragic story of fear, isolation, and murder at the heart of this circus tale. Bradbury continued to improve the tale in successive drafts, and in all likelihood it was still in play as the title story in 1948, the probable time period of the next surviving outline for The Illustrated Man. But this second outline is fragmentary, written (in Bradbury's hand) down the right margin of a heavily canceled intermediate typed outline that

had become a creative dead end.[3] The new fragment contains fourteen story titles that form the basis for the third surviving outline, dated December 1948 and containing twenty-one stories that, in aggregate, continued to yield a sum greater than the individual parts. Here again was a rich mix that crossed genre barriers, devised by Bradbury to affirm, at least between the lines, that he had never observed genre boundaries or conventions during the uncontrolled creative bursts that he depended on to shape the first drafts of each story.

He was also beginning to put some distance between his book outlines and the weird tales that represented his earliest success as a writer. None of his early weirds remained in the third outline of December 1948; they were replaced by more edgy Bradbury terrors such as "Marionettes, Inc.," "The Screaming Woman," and "Riabouchinska." These last two had not yet reached print, but a radio adaptation of "Ria" had aired on a 1947 CBS Radio episode of Suspense. The O. Henry Prize anthology story "Homecoming" was gone, but Bradbury retained his O. Henry award winner "Powerhouse" and added "I See You Never," which earned a place in the Best American Short Stories anthology of 1948. This was also a time when he polished and published many of the Martian stories he had been writing in Venice Beach, southwest of Los Angeles, feeling the electrical inspiration of the adjacent power station humming just a few feet away from his typewriter. Seven of these tales of Martian contact, settlement, and abandonment appear in the third Illustrated Man outline, and six would eventually appear in The Martian Chronicles.

Bradbury had now gathered the full harvest promised by the original outline of 1947, and during the winter of 1948–49 this third outline and its stories, complete with a cover page dated December 8, 1948, was under review with the major trade house of Farrar–Straus in New York. In March 1949 he added "The Golden Window," a beautiful fantasy-allegory that he had written

during the war, but in the end it made no difference; Farrar-Straus may have found The Illustrated Man contents "a little bit of everything, and not enough of one thing" (as Bradbury feared), or they may have simply relied on the publishing history of the individual stories as house editors designated each one "pulp" or "quality." Bradbury resented this reductionist rationale, but there was little he could do about the underlying pressures facing all the trade houses; rising publishing costs, and the fact that story collections were hard to sell, offered little consolation for a writer whose rapid rise to prominence was still limited to the short story form.

Between April and May 1949, Bradbury took counsel from Don Congdon and radio producer Norman Corwin and, with the prospect of some good meals at Corwin's New York apartment, made plans to promote his outlines in person. Congdon felt that Bradbury's congeniality and ability to sell the virtues of his fiction, evident during his earlier 1946 trip East, might win over publishers and editors. Thanks to Congdon's connections and Bradbury's popularity in the mainstream magazine market, many house editors already knew Bradbury or were familiar with his unique and poetic prose style. Even one sale would make the trip worthwhile, but Doubleday's Walter Bradbury (no relation) offered a two-book contract based on the promise that Ray Bradbury could turn his Martian stories and one of his short science fiction novellas into two books that could somehow make the creative leap from story collections to novels. Bradbury had taken a re-mix of his Illustrated Man story collection along under the title of his 1948 story "Pillar of Fire," a near-novella length science fantasy that took on the "death of the imagination" issues of censorship that were beginning to confront postwar American literary publishing. In early June, while still in New York, Bradbury gutted the Pillar of Fire collection outline to shape the foundation for The Martian Chronicles. For the second book he offered up his 1946 short novella "The Creatures That Time Forgot," which he now intended to extend into a novel titled

Frost and Fire.

Fourth Outline

Bradbury returned home with his story collection portfolio in complete disarray; what remained of the Illustrated Man collection concept, which until just a few months earlier had represented the full range of his best stories, was temporarily buried within other outline options.[4] As he began to bridge many of his Martian stories into the new Chronicles concept, he also began to consider how he might be able to advance his new relationship with Doubleday into a third book that would showcase some of the better science fiction stories that remained. That category continued to expand, for he was now in demand across the entire range of science fiction pulps and had broken into the slicks with his science fiction as well. It was only natural that his next outline on the trail to The Illustrated Man took shape around that genre focus.

The fourth outline is subtitled, all in a tentative lower case, as "a book of tales by r.b. for doubleday?" The question mark suggests a date of fall 1949, a time when Bradbury had just submitted his fully bridged and integrated Martian Chronicles typescript and was trying to figure out how to expand his "Creatures That Time Forgot" novella into Frost and Fire for Doubleday. For the moment, his title story shifted to "Forever and the Earth," a new composition that imagined Thomas Wolfe, rescued by a time traveler from his premature deathbed, writing emotionally-charged tales of a far future Earth and cosmos. In spite of the shift in title story, the twelve stories listed confirm this long-overlooked page as the missing bridge between the earlier and later Illustrated Man outlines—for the first time, a large component of the listed stories (six of twelve) began to define the contents of the actual book.

"Kaleidoscope," "The Visitor," "Zero Hour," "The Veldt," "The City," and "The Other Foot" would all carry through into the final published version of The Illustrated Man. Two more titles

could easily make a total of eight: "The Space Man" may be a variant title for either "The Man" or "The Rocket Man," and "The Man With the Key in His Back" could represent "Marionettes, Inc.," which had first appeared back in the third outline. In spite of the fact that only twelve stories appear in this somewhat tentative fourth outline—written at a time when all of his collection concepts were constantly shifting—every one of the stories fit the science fiction focus of the final product. Even the loss of "The Illustrated Man," the original title story, is consistent with the evolution of the collection. Bradbury no longer needed a fully-articulated horror story to open what had now become a science fiction collection. His illustrated man was on the way to becoming a metaphor for storytelling; when he resurfaced, very late in the process, it would be as a bridging character whose tattoos opened out into various stories of the future.

Fifth Outline

By the spring of 1950, the need to develop this new story collection suddenly became an immediate concern. Bradbury now realized that expanding "The Creatures That Time Forgot," a story much better than its pulp title, into Frost and Fire might not be the best way to reach the level of sustained long fiction that had so far eluded him. By May 1950, he had developed a fifth outline, intending to incorporate "The Creatures That Time Forgot" (as the title story "Frost and Fire") without expanding it from its original short novella form. This is the longest and most carefully revised of all the surviving outlines, and it has the most to tell about the long and complicated road to The Illustrated Man.

The twenty-eight titles that moved in and out of the Frost and Fire outline underscore the merits of the published stories that existed beyond the Martian Chronicles group. The special Bradbury brand of science fiction or science fantasy, privileging the human factor over technology, was now dominating his Muse. His early and mid-1940s successes with weird

fiction, paralleled for a time with success as an off-trail writer in the detective fiction magazines, had now given way to equally distinctive science fiction that editors and readers alike had come to expect and enjoy. He had two short novellas already in hand and published—"Pillar of Fire" and the re-titled "Frost and Fire"—and he was in the midst of composing an even longer one, "The Fire Man," destined to evolve into Fahrenheit 451 three years later. But that was a far and uncharted future for a writer who still concentrated on drafting a story a week; for the moment, all three of these novellas were gathered into the fifth outline.

Between May 20 and August 19, 1950, Ray Bradbury re-worked this outline in close consultation with Doubleday editor Walt Bradbury, who approved the contractual change from novel to story collection in early July. Beneath all the revisions, the original typed layer shows twenty-four titles (including the three novellas) and a word count of 131,000. Doubleday needed a more manageable collection to stay within their $2.75 price point, and in mid-July Walt Bradbury recommended cutting all three of the novellas along with "Forever and the Earth," which was already scheduled for a multi-author anthology. This layer of revision is clearly discernible, and includes the addition of "Zero Hour" and "The Playground," stories that both author and editor felt would strengthen the collection.

The fifth outline's final layer of revision reveals Bradbury's last cuts: "Payment in Full," "The Playground," "The Vacation," and "The Pedestrian." The first was perhaps the weakest of his published Martian tales; the other three remained unsold and in any event would not clear serial publication before the February 1951 release date of the story collection. The addition of "The Highway," and "The Exiles" brought the revised outline word count in at 78,000. In spite of the multiple layers of revision, the final book contents had finally taken form—seventeen of the eighteen titles published in The Illustrated Man were now featured. Bradbury added the

eighteenth and final story, "No Particular Night or Morning," in his August 19th letter to Doubleday, raising his final estimated word count to 84,000. Frost and Fire remained as the volume title, but none of the title stories from any of the first five outlines (including "Frost and Fire") remained when he was done revising this fifth outline.

Sixth and Seventh Outlines

Not surprisingly, the sixth outline, probably prepared during early August 1950, bears no title story at all. Esquire's July 1950 publication of "The Illustrated Man" persuaded Bradbury to re-consider restoring this much-traveled tale as the volume's title story, but Walt Bradbury reminded him that its deep roots in the horror tradition had little in common with the book's emerging science fiction focus. In late July he briefly considered the title Perhaps We Are Going Away, but it had no direct relevance (in either content or theme) to the volume (the title was subsequently bestowed on a 1962 story). There is, however, some evidence that Bradbury was working his way through this impasse over the volume's title concept. The contents of the sixth outline are framed, top and bottom, by references to the "Prologue" and "Epilogue" that eventually became as famous as any of the actual stories in the collection.

The seventh outline, prepared after July 1950, locks in The Illustrated Man as volume title and expands the framing title into "Prologue: The Illustrated Man." Bradbury now envisioned an itinerant tattooed man, sharing a campfire with the prologue's narrator. This illustrated man is an outcast from the world of carnivals, for the witch who inked his body empowered each image with movement; they tell their tales, and even foresee the future. The narrator tries to sleep, but his gaze focuses on one of the illustrated man's tattoos. This image begins to open out into the volume's first story. The narrator's enchantment soon extends to the reader—a single bridging sentence is all that's required to take the reader on into the second story. No more bridges are

necessary; these science fiction tales run their course, leading up to a chilling epilogue that gives the entire range of stories a sense of continuity and closure.

With the Prologue / Epilogue frames in place, Bradbury had no need to provide further structure to a strong collection of stories. But the internal evidence in outlines six and seven show that he took some care to re-arrange the stories that eventually settled into the middle section of the book. In outline six, the movement of "The Rocket," full of the child-focused wonderment of space travel, from the middle to the end of the collection resulted in the temporary deletion of "No Particular Night or Morning," a dark tale of isolation in space that drives a freighter crewman to insanity and suicide. That dark tale moved into the middle of the seventh outline, where Bradbury considered deleting it yet again, along with three other mid-book stories—"The Exiles," "The Visitor," and "The Concrete Mixer." These are tales of illusion and reality, stories that also touch on the death of the imagination. Literary masters of dark fiction ("The Exiles"), illusionists ("The Visitor"), and even Martian poets ("The Concrete Mixer") come to dark and disturbing ends.

His marginal calculations indicate a potential savings of 20,000 words, but as he went to press he kept them all in a slightly rearranged order. The final volume order of stories shows a careful pacing through the volume as Bradbury offered a varying progression of dark and ironic, edgy and terrifying. The strongest stories—"The Veldt," "The Rocket Man," "The Fire Balloons," "The Fox and the Forest," and "Zero Hour"—are sequenced in ways that sustain an emotional intensity and uneasiness across the entire volume. His postwar science fiction stories reflected the unimaginable terrors of an increasingly uncertain atomic age, and the often unspoken wariness and hopelessness that came to characterize his view of the early Cold War years was even more apparent when the better stories were gathered together. On July 30, 1950,

he offered his Doubleday editor a telling comment: "In reading over the book I have been somewhat appalled by the overwhelming pessimism in a good many of the stories. . . ." The themes of antirealism and anti-materialism may be overworked in The Illustrated Man, but Bradbury's deep exploration of human values in a technological age provides a quality common to most of the stories. The process by which he brought these stories together in an enduring collection is documented to some degree in his professional correspondence, but the surviving outlines, studied in their most likely sequence of composition, bring us into the very center of his larger literary judgments and visions at a crucial time in his career.

Given the textual history of Dark Carnival and The Martian Chronicles, it should come as no surprise that Bradbury continued to refashion The Illustrated Man even after it was released in February 1951. He lobbied hard for Doubleday to drop what he considered the weakest stories—"The Visitor" and "No Particular Night or Morning"— but Doubleday's Walt Bradbury was able to convince him that variations from both the first hardbound printings and the ever-popular Bantam paperback edition would confuse library cataloguers and upset readers who would expect to find what earlier readers had found between the covers of this popular Bradbury collection. As one might expect, Doubleday did not have the last word. To this day, most (but not all) British editions contain variant contents, and by 1997, with the Doubleday hardbound editions long out of print, Bradbury was able add "The Illustrated Man," the anchoring tale for the original multiple-genre collection concept, to the Avon (later Morrow) hardbound edition.

These outlines, seven variations on a story collection concept, offer valuable evidence for those who wish to study Bradbury's evolving creativity and the intriguing ways he perceived his stories in various combinations across time. At least a hundred pages of such volume outlines, defining dozens of his books and book ideas, survive today; they span his career, but most are

concentrated on the richly creative decades from the 1940s to the early 1970s. Though often complete in the sense of being self-contained dreams of imagined futures, many of these outlines portray or predict works that never coalesced, or that metamorphosed, like the chrysalis image that was central to Bradbury's concept of creativity, into far different forms than their beginnings seemed to promise.

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From time to time, Bradbury would pause and feed his imagination with alternate world glimpses of an even broader universe—future volume timelines. At least seven such glimpses survive, and each one can be roughly dated from the point where the list of actual publications trails off into year-by-year speculations or dreams of future works. Figure 2 displays the future timelines he devised between 1949 and 1964, a fifteen-year stretch that also saw the publication of some of his most significant books. The shaded areas across these timelines represent reality—the past and forthcoming books that he listed in order to prime the pump for imagining the future works in each list. The unshaded areas across the table forecast the future as he saw it shaping up from particular moments in time.

Bradbury's Projected Book Publication Schedule, 1949–1970

	Projected c.1949	Projected c.1950	Projected c. 1952	Projected c. 1956–57	Projected c. 1960	Projected c.1963	Projected c.1964	Actual Publications
1947	Dark Carnival	Dark Carnival	Dark Carnival	Dark Carnival			Dark Carnival	*Dark Carnival*
1948								
1949								
1950	The Martian Chronicles	The Martian Chronicles	The Martian Chronicles	The Martian Chronicles			The Martian Chronicles	*The Martian Chronicles*
1951	Frost and Fire	The Illustrated Man	The Illustrated Man	The Illustrated Man			The Illustrated Man	*The Illustrated Man*
1952	The Masks	Summer Mornings, Nights						
1953	Interval in Sunlight	The Masks	The Golden Apples of the Sun	The Golden Apples of the Sun			The Golden Apples of the Sun	*The Golden Apples of the Sun*
				Fahrenheit 451			Fahrenheit 451	*Fahrenheit 451*
1954	Clash by Night	Pillar of Fire	The Mask Behind the Mask				Moby Dick (screenplay)	
							The October Country	
1955	Blue Remembered Hills	The Space War		Switch on the Night			Switch on the Night	*Switch on the Night*
				The October Country				*The October Country*
1956	The Golden Ravine	Long After Midnight		Moby Dick (Release)				*Moby Dick* (Release)
1957	The Illustrated Man	The Vampire Family		Dandelion Wine			Dandelion Wine	*Dandelion Wine*
1958	Just a Short One			The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit				
1959	Many Long Years Ago			Jamie and Me			A Medicine for Melancholy	*A Medicine for Melancholy*
1960	The Green Rain			The Watchful Wakers				
1961	Weather and War			By Time Forgotten	Something Wicked This Way Comes			
1962				In the Eye of the Beholder	A Clear View of the Rising Mist		Something Wicked This Way Comes	*Something Wicked This Way Comes*
							R Is for Rocket	*R Is for Rocket*
1963				The Long Journey	I Sing the Body Electric	The Anthem Sprinters	The Anthem Sprinters	*The Anthem Sprinters*
1964				The Masks	The Pandemonium Theatre Co Presents!	The Machineries of Joy	The Machineries of Joy	*The Machineries of Joy*
						Dusk in the Electric Cities		
1965					Pius the Wanderer	Nemo!	S Is for Space	*The Vintage Bradbury*
						The Dogs That Eat Sweet Grass	The Vintage Bradbury	
1966					Summer Morning Summer Night	Leviathan '99	Nemo!	*S Is for Space*
						The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit	The Hallowe'en Book	*Twice 22*
1967					Masquerade	Farewell Summer	Dusk in the Electric Cities	
						Back Up Around Over		
1968					The Next in Line	Masquerade	Leviathan '99	
						Broadside!		
1969						Pius the Wanderer		*I Sing the Body Electric!*
1970						Screenplays		

Figure 2. Shading designates Bradbury's actual publication history; the unshaded titles project possible futures on each timeline.

In this way the various timelines together form an intriguing pattern of documentation and imagination. The unshaded titles projected from the 1949 list (left), the earliest known timeline, was composed before Bradbury abandoned the Frost and Fire companion to The Martian Chronicles. The Masks, an intense exploration of the identities that people are often forced to assume to survive in the modern world, appears next in the timeline, followed by Interval in Sunlight, a study of Americans in Mexico based on his extensive three-month journey throughout Mexico in 1945. Several title variations for The Masks would carry through six of the eight timelines, but only fragments of it would ever reach print. The Mexican novel yielded two of his best examples of subjective realism ("The Next in Line" and "Interval in Sunlight") before evolving into both a stage play and an unproduced screenplay. "The Blue Remembered Hills" was an early title for his Illinois novel, the source for both the Dandelion Wine novelized story cycle (1957) and Farewell Summer (2005), crafted from the remaining chapters of the original novel concept.

Other milestones can also be de-coded across these timelines. Long After Midnight and The Illustrated Man (already separated from the actual science fiction collection of that name) each offered possible title stories for a collection of weird tales, but the publication of The October Country (as well as his lessening interest in writing such stories) eclipsed both of these titles over time (in 1976, Long After Midnight would eventually resurface as a far broader collection of old and new stories). The Vampire Family, a gathering of his off-trail Elliot family stories from the 1940s and early 1950s, traveled through many title iterations before publication as the late-life novel From the Dust Returned (2000). One can also trace the cascading sequence of title stories for various mid-career story collections: The Wonderful Ice Cream Suit became A Medicine for Melancholy (1959), I Sing the Body Electric became The Machineries of Joy (1964); and Dusk

in the Electric Cities, a well-traveled title also considered for his first poetry collection, appears in the 1964 timeline as a tentative title for I Sing the Body Electric! (1969).

Jamie and Me, an interim title for Something Wicked This Way Comes (1962), reflected the first-person narrative (modeled on Huckleberry Finn) of Bradbury's initial draft of the novel. The Hallowe'en Book eventually became The Halloween Tree (1972), while Nemo! settled into obscurity as his unfinished attempt to resurrect Jules Verne's Captain Nemo as a twenty-first century explorer-scientist. The Irish story collection A Clear View of the Rising Mist never appealed to his various publishers; the title would find more traction within his growing stable of Irish stage plays instead, and the stories themselves would be woven into the larger fabric of his autobiographical novel, Green Shadows, White Whale (1991). Just a Short One, his earliest attempt at shaping his Irish one-act plays into a larger publishable structure, culminated in The Anthem Sprinters and Other Antics (1963).

The elusiveness of these various timeline projects is complicated by the surrounding field of largely unknown works—projects that never had a chance to fully form within the fast-paced creative world of Ray Bradbury. Designated story collections such as The Golden Ravine and In the Eye of the Beholder, as well as the "tales for children" planned for Many Years Ago, never coalesced in any recognizable way. The Green Rain, a novel of Venus projected on the scale of The Martian Chronicles, remained a dream deferred. Other large-scale projects of the early 1950s reflect the looming specter of global nuclear war. These include Weather and War, also known as The Appointed Round, a darkly inverted allusion to the postman's oath to deliver the mail through all weather: through cataclysmic flood, famine, and pestilence, mankind "struggles to survive just so he can—conduct WAR!" During those years Bradbury was equally certain that humanity would take war to the high frontier as well; his timelines include The Space War,

outlined on a separate page as a dark novel of interplanetary war told from multiple points of view by those who must endure it.

As unstable as they are, these lists are by no means representations of ephemeral daydreams. In 1986, Bradbury sent his 1956 timeline to Donn Albright, with this reflective commentary: "One of those lists I often make to promise or obligate myself to possible futures!" Those words are gentle compared to earlier self-assessments of his motivation; Bradbury typed this far more strident epilogue at the end of his 1952 timeline:

> When people say that I am prolific, I say to them, what is a writer if he doesn't write, what is a painter who does not paint, what is a human being who does not live. I live as much as I can and I write as much as I can. That means that I live every day and I write every day, without fail, to the fullest. I have no patience with the people who talk about writing but never write. What good are theories without practice? If it takes eight or ten hours a day to make a good pianist, then shouldn't it take eight or ten hours a day to become a writer? And with the passage of time, shouldn't one become more proficient, and more easily be able to say what one has to say when one wants to say it. From finger exercises to etudes, to fugues, to chamber music, to symphonies, be it in music or writing, the progression is nothing if not normal. Don't say I am prolific, say only that I am natural.

In the closing lines of this analogy, Bradbury returned to the essential race against time that he always felt as a writer: "Don't say I write an immense amount each year, say only that I have a short while to live and want to say my say before the curtain comes down." His many story fragments and his constantly shifting book outlines are the inevitable by-products of this unrelenting writing passion. In turn, the evolving outlines for The Illustrated Man and many

other books compelled him to chart even more distant futures through the pages of his projected publishing timelines. “You never know what waits beyond the next page,” he wrote on a worn and battered clipboard during the 1950s. “Go look, come back, and report!”

And so he did.

Endnotes

[1] Eller and Touponce, Ray Bradbury: The Life of Fiction (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2004), 62–66 (Dark Carnival) and 124–133 (The Martian Chronicles); Eller, Becoming Ray Bradbury (University of Illinois Press, 2011), 146.

[2] Eller and Touponce, The Life of Fiction, chapters 1–2 and inclusive figures 3–4, 6–7, tables 2–6.

[3] The underlying typed outline was divided into two purely chronological categories ("The Old Ones" and "The New Ones"); this list is buried beneath handwritten deletions and sequence adjustments that soon became unworkable.

[4] See Eller and Touponce, The Life of Fiction, xx.